51:Hart E-3 (1950-1952)1954 OAI Philippines
Central Bisayan OA14

796 sentation implies. First, the novenas (either individual or group prayers) which usually precede the fiesta, the last prayer occurring on *vesperas* evening. Second, the masses held in honor of the patron saint on *vesperas* [851] (the day before *kahologan*) and *kahologan* mornings. Third, the baptism of babies, particularly those born since the last fiesta in *barrios* isolated from the *poblacion* church. In some *barrios* distant from the *poblacion* church of Siaton, as many as 30 babies were baptized by the priest when he visited the community for their annual fiesta. Fourth, the religious procession held on the afternoon of *kahologan* (sometimes on *vesperas*) when the patron saint is taken from the chapel or church and paraded around the fiesta area.

The religious, economic, and social activities of the rural fiesta complex are not solely concentrated in the "fiesta core" which, for most purposes, can be described as *vesperas* and *kahologan* days although variations do exist in some *poblacion* (but rarely *barrio*) fiestas. A series of weekly pre-fiesta dances are held, sometimes beginning two or three months before the "fiesta core." Barrio Caticugan's pre-fiesta Saturday night dances began (in 1951) a month before *vesperas* while those in Siaton *poblacion* started nearly three months before *vesperas* in 1950. As the fiesta approaches these dances increase in frequency, attendance, and admission fee for the individual. Many of the people begin to repair, or even enlarge, their dwellings for the coming fiesta. Efforts are made to earn additional money in order to entertain properly visitors during the fiesta, buy new clothing, etc. One of the busiest periods of tailors and dressmakers in the rural areas is several months before the fiesta. No Filipino likes to wear the [838] same dress at two different fiestas. Beauticians (often *bayulas*)[4] invade [305] the *poblacions* and *barrios* along the road to set up their permanent wave shops. Local stores begin to stock their shelves with foods associated with the fiesta but not normally sold to their patrons. More and more committee meetings are held regarding the fiesta organization as the period approaches.

796 941 An innovation introduced to the original Spanish fiesta complex is the beauty or popularity contest. The beauty candidates are local *barrio* or *poblacion* girls who are supported by various factions in their communities. In the *poblacion* for example, the municipal employees, merchants, and school-teachers will sponsor a candidate for "Queen" or "Muse" of the fiesta. These contests are not as typical of *barrio* fiestas as in larger communities, nor nearly as elaborate. Tickets are sold by the candidates

[4] Hermaphrodites.

51:Hart E-3 (1950-1952)1954 OA1 Philippines
Central Bisayan OA14

or their supporters which represent a certain number of votes. The candidate selling the most tickets wins the honor of being the "Queen" of the fiesta, the runners-up are the "Princesses" or the "Queen's 'damas.'" In the larger *poblacions* and cities these contests became elaborate affairs and the candidates' parents or relatives may spend thousands of pesos to make their daughter the "Queen". In these areas, the contest is more often a struggle within the small elite than within the community as a whole.

The organization of each fiesta is done by various committees, a method which gives Filipinos, particularly those living in *barrios*, some valuable experience in committee work—one basic aspect of democracy in action.[7] Committee organization increases in size and complexity as one moves from the small *barrio* fiesta to large urban fiestas. There are usually the following committees in most fiestas: executive or board of directors; arches (to build the bamboo-paper decorated arches under which the patron saint is carried during the procession); athletics (to arrange for various competitive sports); auditorium and decoration (to build a temporary dancing area, especially in the *barrios*, or prepare and decorate the plaza or schoolhouse); beauty or popularity contest; dance; decorations (often listed as "all lady teachers" whose responsibility is to decorate the church and altar); finance and audit (usually chaired by the municipal treasurer); invitation and reception; lights (sometimes such a committee must arrange to rent a generator to supply electricity during the fiesta period); music; parade; publicity; program; and patrons and donors (to obtain prizes for the various contests held during the fiesta).

The membership of the *barrio*, and particularly the *poblacion*, fiesta committees is largely composed of the *principalia*—the more prominent people of the community. In the *barrio*, social and economic stratification is not as visible or complex as in the *poblacion*; but it exists, nevertheless, in a milder form. The importance of the *principalia* in organizing the Philippine fiesta is a distinct difference between most of the fiesta of Mexico where the organizational and administrative aspects of the event are disdained by the more prominent citizens. If the fiesta is to be more effectively used as a way of giving the people increased experience in committee work, the organizational aspects need to be broadened to include more individuals outside the *principalia*. Whether this can be accomplished, however, under the present systems of social stratification in the Philippines is somewhat dubious.

[7] In a penetrating and provocative article, Lansang states the lack of experience of most Filipinos with "so elementary a democratic tool as the committee of conference." Jose Lansang, "The Philippine-American Experiment, a Filipino View," *Pacific Affairs*, 25:233, September, 1952.